



PORTLAND FREIGHT COMMITTEE

January 5, 2015

Art Pearce
Portland Bureau of Transportation
1120 W 5th Ave, Suite 800
Portland, Oregon 97204

Re: 2030 Bicycle Plan and Transportation System Plan Update

The Portland Freight Committee chairs appreciate the opportunity to collaborate with the elected officers of the other modal advisory committees and PBOT coordinators at the Modal Advisory Committee Workgroup meetings to discuss the policy language and functional classification changes in the 2030 Bike Plan and other related Transportation System Plan issues. The purpose of this letter is to provide our comments and recommendations on the 2030 Bike Plan and respond to the proposed TSP project selection criteria as requested by PBOT staff.

2030 Bike Plan and related TSP Policy Issues

Along with the Modal Advisory Committee Workgroup discussions this fall, the PFC held a separate subcommittee meeting on December 15th, 2014 to review the proposed policy language and functional classification changes in the 2030 Bike Plan and how they overlap with the policies and street classifications in Freight Master Plan. The following is a summary of the issues that were raised:

- The PFC expressed overall concerns with trying to accommodate too many modes (bikes, trucks, autos, buses) onto one corridor. Certain streets cannot serve all modes safely or efficiently and choices need to be made for prioritizing certain movements over others. As such, there are inherent challenges in trying to broadly apply the proposed 2030 Bikeway policy and design language on streets that are designated to accommodate heavy truck movements such as Priority and Major Truck Streets. An example is N. Lombard Street in St Johns which is a proposed City Bikeway but must be designed to accommodate and prioritize heavy trucks as there are no other viable alternative routes available. While transportation policy should strike a balance between being prescriptive enough to provide sufficient direction while also allowing flexibility in its implementation, the city still needs to evaluate each individual corridor and the implication for street design based on the unique context-sensitive characteristics of each corridor and surrounding land uses.
- The PFC also raised concerns with the specific policy language in the 2030 Bike Plan that calls

for the potential removal of travel lanes and on-street parking as they pertain to Major and Priority Truck Streets. There needs to be counterbalancing policy language for mitigating the loss of freight/roadway capacity or similar “do no harm” language to Major and Priority Truck Streets and designated Freight Districts. The PFC proposed the following concept for policy development for the other modal committees to consider: “After an impact analysis is performed to determine the level of reduced capacity and or travel time, can the removal of a lane or on-street parking remain an option? If the level of lost capacity or travel is reduced by “x” then a mitigation plan shall be developed.” The PFC welcomes the opportunity in continuing to work with the other modal committees and PBOT staff in crafting policy language that can meet our mutual transportation objectives without adversely affecting freight movement.

- In January 2010, the PFC submitted comments to City Council on the then draft 2030 Bike Plan and suggested the following modifications which are still applicable today and provided for your further consideration:

Priority Truck Streets - The PFC believes that Priority Truck Streets are a key City and regional resource and their primary freight function must take priority. We suggest that, for Priority Truck Streets, freight movement should receive the highest priority because of the lack of alternative routes. On these streets emphasis in the Bicycle Plan should be on providing alternatives that are out of the roadway such as trails, paths or bike boulevards on parallel routes. The PFC believes that bike boulevards are a win-win, benefiting both bicycle users -- by making their trips more stress free -- and freight movement by separating bike users from freight vehicles. If there are no parallel routes or opportunities for separated facilities, bicycle facilities should be placed on Priority Truck Streets only if they can be accommodated without reducing the existing number of lanes or the recommended lane widths as adopted by City policy.¹

Major Truck Streets - Here again, the PFC would suggest that bike boulevards on parallel facilities be the first option for providing movement in these corridors. When no parallel facility exists the PFC believes great care must be used in integrating bicycle facilities on Major Truck Streets so as not to diminish the freight capacity or travel time of these important commercial corridors. We would suggest that the City adopt the following hierarchy in facilitating bicycle movement on Major Truck Streets:

- a. Restripe to accommodate bike lanes without removing travel lanes or reducing existing lanes to a width of less than 12 feet.*
- b. Remove on-street parking to accommodate a bicycle lane.*
- c. As a last resort, remove travel lanes if it can be demonstrated that freight travel time in the corridor will not be degraded rather than reducing travel lane width below 12 feet. Narrower lanes provide the illusion of capacity on the route but are*

¹ Designing for Trucks and Other Large Vehicles in Portland, Adopted October, 2008

not safe for trucks and other large vehicle and create conflicts between freight and other users when the freight vehicles can't effectively fit in the lanes.

- d. *When travel lanes are to be removed from streets that have lanes less than 12 feet wide, expand the remaining travel lanes up to 12 feet as well as expand the bicycle lanes. A more comfortable lane width eases tension and creates a safer corridor. This is true for both bicycle lanes and motor vehicle lanes.*

- PFC members also expressed concerns that private autos are not adequately represented in the TSP update process even though they represent over 80 percent of all roadway users. It is often difficult to distinguish private single-occupant vehicle use from business use (e.g., business sales and service calls using private autos, pick-ups and vans). Short of a comprehensive congestion pricing mechanism, it is difficult to simultaneously discourage auto trips while also facilitating freight/business oriented trips. Failure to acknowledge and adequately address the mobility needs of all roadway users can result in unintended consequences of increased congestion on our major arterial streets and commercial corridors which increases vehicle emissions and traffic diversion onto local streets which degrades neighborhood livability and safety.

Transportation Hierarchy

While we understand the Transportation Hierarchy has been revised from its original proposal in the Climate Action Plan and 2030 Bike Plan, much confusion still remains on its overall intent and which street classifications it would be applied to. It's also unclear on the overall utility of the hierarchy in addressing policy conflicts or how it will be applied at the project development and design levels. Since most Portland street corridors are multi-functional, street design is based on the context sensitivity of the surrounding land uses and connecting transportation network. As currently proposed, it's unclear how the hierarchy would help resolve classification conflicts and competing modal needs. Unless otherwise clarified how it will be applied, the PFC recommends that the hierarchy be excluded from Major and Priority Truck Streets and designated Freight District Streets.

In order to help guide PBOT in prioritizing modes when making transportation investment and design decisions, the PFC supports the concepts identified in the Vancouver, BC Transportation 2040 Plan.² Goods movement is intentionally excluded from Vancouver's modal hierarchy due to the recognition of the importance of freight to the local economy and is treated more as a function of the overall transportation system. The PFC believes the Vancouver 2040 Plan serves as a good model and will continue working with the other modal committees and PBOT staff to craft a more workable and effective decision-making tool that reflects all modal needs.

² The plan can be found at:
http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Transportation_2040_Plan_as_adopted_by_Council.pdf

TSP Project Selection Criteria

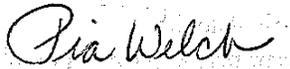
It is our understanding that the currently proposed project selection criteria is based on the criteria in the adopted Portland Freight Master Plan. While the PFC supports the inclusion of the two economic benefit criteria for *Freight Access* and *Freight Mobility*, it seems necessary to first ground truth them to make sure the criteria works both fairly and consistently. This would seem a necessary first step to ensure the criteria reflects the actual needs of the overall transportation system and help set project priorities for allocating funding resources. The PFC would also like to reiterate that TSP remain a list of long-term (20 year) transportation needs and not as a programming document for allocating short-term transportation funding.

The Portland Freight Committee appreciates the opportunity to collaborate with the other modal advisory committee officers and PBOT staff in addressing these important policy issues and we look forward in continuing our discussions in addressing the city's critical transportation needs.

Sincerely,



Debra Dunn
PFC Chair



Pia Welch
PFC Vice Chair

Cc:

David Aulwes, Rod Merrick, Heather McCarey, Ian Stude, Judith Gray, Courtney Duke, Bob Hillier, Roger Geller, Sara Schooley, Denver Igarta, Peter Hurley